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PART-IIA

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

NOTIFICATION

The 1st September, 2021.

No.SYA.140/2021/37. – The Governor of Meghalaya is pleased to accord approval of the Meghalaya State Youth Policy, 2021 which is hereunder:-

Chapter 1

1. Introduction and Rationale

According to the latest estimates of the world's population, 1.2 billion individuals are in the age group of 15-24 years *i.e.*, one in every six persons worldwide is a young person in the age group of 15-24 years. The global youth population is projected to grow by 7 percent to 1.3 billion by 2030¹. In the context of India, over half the population is under the age of 25 years *i.e.* approximately 600 Million. India is expected to become the 4th largest economy by 2025 contributing about 5.5 % – 6 % of the world GDP² and the 600 million youth will play a pivotal role in achieving this.

In Meghalaya, the proportion of young people is even higher than the national average - the percentage of population under the age of 45 is 85 %, under 35 is 74 % and under 25 is 59 %. The age group 15 – 24 years has a population of over 8.5 Lakhs and constitutes approximately 22 percent of the State's population. This large proportion of the State's population, if provided the right opportunities, could become the key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. It is imperative to prepare young people as future leaders, guardians, advocates, entrepreneurs and custodians of the State by addressing their needs and aspirations. In recognising this, targeted interventions, focused on critical facets that affect the youth, need to be implemented to ensure that all young people get opportunities to grow in an enabling environment and flourish as fully engaged, responsive and productive citizens.

Youth constitute a unique group representing a positive force with the enormous potential to contribute to development. However, as young people transition from the dependency of childhood to the autonomy and responsibility of adulthood, they are faced with many aspects of vulnerability. In contrast to their

¹UN World Youth Report 2020

² NITI Aayog's 12th Five Year Plan

parents, the current younger generation in the State are growing up in a complex world because of the forces of globalisation, the rapid spread of mass communication, multimedia and the internet, the structure of the economy and the job market and increasing access to drugs and alcohol. Young people are most at risk from several socio-economic challenges including unemployment, low income, physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, crime and violence and a wide range of health issues, including reproductive health impacting young women. Given the range of issues that impact the youth, there is a need for synergized efforts in the planning, implementation and evaluation of youth programmes so that young people can have a future by choice and not by chance.

This Policy addresses major concerns and issues critical for the youth of Meghalaya and seeks to provide direction to youth programmes and services provided by governmental, private, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community and other youth organisations (YO). As a strategic document, the Policy will:

1. Set goals and policy priorities
2. Propose key interventions in different sectors
3. Createan implementation framework
4. Formulate a mechanism for coordination, monitoring and review.

1.1 Definition and Classification of Youth

The United Nations defines Youth to be best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of interdependence as citizens of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. However, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly while considering the issues of education and employment, because 'youth' is often referred to as a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education and finding his/her first job.

The National Youth Policy, 2014 classifies youth as those individuals between the age of 15-29 years. The United Nations Youth Strategy classifies youth as those individuals between the age of 15 - 24 Years. Following the National Youth Policy, the Meghalaya Youth Policy also defines youth as individuals in the age group of 15-29 years.

The State Government also realizes that the emotional, social and physical development of young children has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adults they will become. Hence there is a crucial need to invest in children for maximizing their well-being as they transition into adolescence. Accordingly, interventions relating to early childhood development, improvement in quality of elementary education and enhancing the overall nutrition levels of children and mothers need to be prioritized. This policy strongly acknowledges the foundational role of early childhood interventions for youth development and that the policies and programmes around these critical issues are being formulated and implemented by the Department of Social Welfare, Department of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Education, Government of Meghalaya and other stakeholders. This policy therefore focus specifically on the defined age group of 15 – 29 year olds.

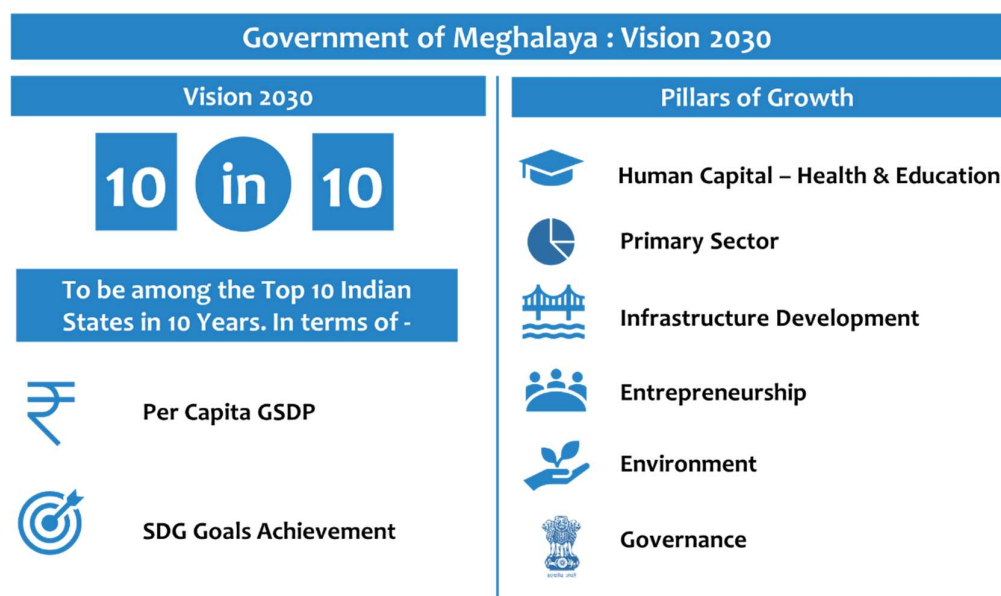
The Government also realizes that youth do not constitute a monolithic or a homogeneous group. Depending on their life situation and background, their needs, and consequently the interventions required to empower them vary. This calls for differentiated strategies for various groups of young people by age, gender, location and educational status. Further, vulnerable and disadvantaged youth would require a specialised focus.

Chapter 2

2 State's Vision 2030 and youth

Meghalaya's population is estimated to be around 38.29 Lakhs of which over 74 percent *i.e.* 28.48 Lakhs are under the age of 35 years (Age wise demographics are at Annexure I). This large section of young people needs to be inspired and empowered to realize their full potential as individuals and citizens of their communities.

The State's Vision for the decade 2020-30 is to become one of the Top Ten States in the country in terms of per capita income and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.



The youth of the State will, naturally, play a pre-eminent role in achieving this vision. This policy lays out the systematic framework for youth engagement that endeavours to ensure all young men and women get support and meaningful opportunities to reach their full potential as they actively participate in the economy and society.

The State Youth Policy is an acknowledgement of the specific needs of young women and men, as well as a formal recognition of their potential to co-design and contribute to the State's development agenda.

2.1 Vision Statement

The Vision for this policy and for the State's youth development framework is the following.

To create pathways for Meghalaya's youth to achieve their fullest potential and for becoming engaged, skilled, creative, responsible and empowered citizens of the local and global community.

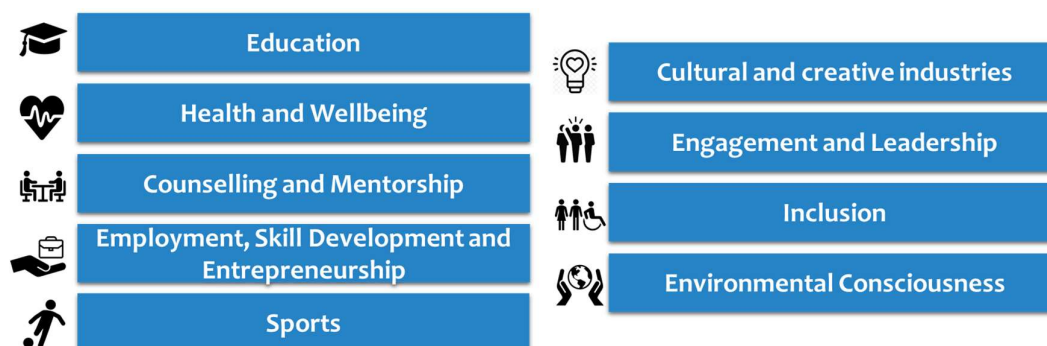
2.2 Objectives of the Policy

-  1 Integrate youth development into the development agenda, policies, and programmes of the State at different levels.
-  2 Develop a productive, healthy and empowered generation that can achieve individual fulfilment and contribute to the economy
-  3 Create opportunities for deeper engagement of young people with the Government and the community
-  4 Promote national and global outlook amongst the youth and make them future ready
-  5 Foster a deep commitment to the environment and ecology amongst young people
-  6 Support youth at risk and create equitable opportunities for all disadvantaged and marginalized youth

Chapter 3

3 Thrust Areas for Intervention

Thrust areas for action emanate from the vision and objectives enunciated under the Policy. These thrust areas are identified with specific reference to the situation prevailing in the State and resources, both human and material, available. The youth development framework for the State, will be built around the following nine thrust areas:



While some of the thrust areas and the proposed interventions around these thrust areas are independent of each other, others are interrelated and intrinsically linked. For example, the lack of the skills and attributes required for obtaining gainful employment is linked with lack of good quality education. Investing in one area affects other priority areas as well thereby creating a multiplier effect in the lives of young people.

3.1 Thrust Area 1 – Education

Education is the foundation of human development and has a bearing on all aspects of life including skill development, employability, social standing, contribution to and participation in the economy and overall well-being. The entire period of childhood, adolescence and early adulthood is spent at school and college for most individuals. Given the importance of education both for individual flourishing and for economic advancement, societies have always accorded primacy to the issue. The relevant education categories for youth would be Secondary education and above.

Present Scenario

Meghalaya ranks 19th amongst Indian States in the Human Development Index 2017. As per the statistics of the state education department, the number of youth enrolled at secondary and higher secondary levels is 1,16,051 and 60,238 respectively. At the secondary level, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is 83.25 which is higher than the national average of 79.35 and the Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) is 56.25 which is significantly lower than the national average of 91.49. At the higher secondary level, both the GER and the GAR are lower than the national average - GER is 40.57 compared to the national 55.4 and the GAR is 44.58 compared to the national 66.36

Several programs targeting the improvement of the access to and quality of education are being implemented with significant deployment of human and financial resources. In school education, multiple interventions are taken up under the Samagra Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) including the construction of new school buildings, additional class rooms, hostels, toilets and science labs, provision of additional teachers, free text books and uniforms, school grants, digital initiatives, training of teachers and out of school children and introduction of vocational education. Further, infrastructure creation like building

additional classrooms is also being undertaken through the schemes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the through Externally Aided Projects.

Other recent intervention include the launch of the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) to ensure continued learning for students and digitization of school textbooks, the operationalization of the E-scholar portal enabling all secondary school students to have easy access to study material as per the MBOSE syllabus and the implementation of the Teacher Information Management System (TIMS) application which captures detail information about teachers and monitors their attendance and arrangements for broadcasting of lessons.

Despite the various programs and interventions important challenges remain, including inadequate infrastructure. A recent infrastructure audit of the education department revealed that 25 % of all secondary high schools in the State require major infrastructure repair works. 38% of all secondary high schools in the State do not have electricity provision. 59% of all secondary high schools in the state do not have a dedicated computer room and 49 % do not have access to ICT labs.

In Higher education, there are 104 institutions in the State, comprising of a central university and institutes of national importance, government and government- aided colleges, professional institutes and private colleges and universities. About 55 percent of this infrastructure is in East Khasi Hills district. Efforts are being made to improve access to higher education in other districts. Under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) program, construction of new professional colleges (Government College of Engineering, Shillong and College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tura) and new model degree colleges, upgradation of existing model degree colleges, infrastructure and equity grants to colleges and training of faculty are being undertaken. Additionally, several Academic, Affiliation and Governance reforms are underway. Other interventions from State Government include upgradation of provincial colleges, setting up of science and commerce colleges and provision of various scholarship schemes.

Future Imperatives

1. Holistic Upgradation of School Infrastructure

Quality infrastructure forms the basis for meaningful learning and engagement of the youth at Schools and Colleges. Accordingly, a program for comprehensive repair, upgradation and new construction of all the Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools will be taken up in a five-year time frame. In addition to physical infrastructure, learning facilities including ICT facilities, Science and Mathematics kits and libraries will be established. Further, several unfinished projects for the construction of Model and Residential Schools will be completed in a time bound manner and new projects shall be taken up.

2. Focus on education of the girl child

Special steps shall be taken towards promoting education of the girl child. Girls hostels will be constructed and operationalised in the educationally backward blocks. Strengthening of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya's shall also be undertaken.

3. Prioritizing quality and improving learning outcomes

Efforts will be made to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes at the secondary and higher secondary level. Teachers training along creating collaborative learning environments will be prioritised.

4. Upscaling Technological interventions

Steps shall be taken for systematic development of ICT infrastructure and smart classrooms in a large proportion of educational institutions in the both urban and rural areas. Further, digital

devices shall also be provided to merit achieving students. These interventions shall bridge the digital divide amongst students across socio economic and geographical barriers.

5. Strengthening of Vocational Education

In line with the National Education Policy 2020, integration of vocational education with mainstream education shall be prioritised. The scale and scope of the existing vocational education programmes shall be expanded in a systematic manner.

6. Making higher education more accessible

Increase in access to higher education is necessary to improve enrolment. Accordingly, new projects being taken up will be located in underserved districts of the State, thus ensuring that Students can get admitted into colleges in their own districts rather than having to relocate to Shillong, Tura or Jowai.

3.2 Thrust Area 2- Health and Wellbeing

Health is the bedrock of individual happiness and economic development. Investing in the health of young people generates triple benefits - healthy young people now, healthy future adults and healthy future generations. While most young people are healthy, several engage in behaviours that jeopardize not only their current health, but often their health for years to come. On a global scale, it is estimated that nearly two-thirds of premature deaths and one-third of the total disease burden in adults are associated with conditions or behaviours that began in their youth including tobacco use, lack of physical activity, unprotected sex or exposure to violence. Health of young women and young mothers is another fundamental facet of youth health.

Present Scenario

Health, in general and maternal health, has been a challenge for many years now in Meghalaya. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of the State is at 2.9 which is second highest in the Country. The Maternal and Infant death is above the national average and one of the highest in the country the State's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is at 33 deaths per 1,000 live births which is almost at par with the national average of 32³ and the Maternal Mortality Rate is at 211 for every 1 lakh live births in comparison to the national figure of 130. Another serious issue plaguing the maternal health is teenage pregnancies. Over 12% of the deliveries reported are from mothers who are under 18 years of age. This significantly reduces the productive age of women in the State, particularly during their younger years. It is also noteworthy that Meghalaya has the lowest contraceptive usage in the country. The prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and drug abuse is also one of the highest and these two issues are often correlated with one another.

The Department of Health and Family Welfare implements several programs for addressing the issues of health and well-being of the young populace in the State. The National Health Mission has multiple programs for tackling the challenges of maternal health including the Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) framework, the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) and the Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK). The State Government's programs include the Meghalaya's Outcome based Transformation in Health, Education, nutrition and Rural Development (MOTHER) program, which was launched to track the health of all the pregnant women and to promote institutional deliveries and the more recent Rescue Mission that aims at saving lives of mothers, neonates and infants.

³Statistics of the Health Management Information System of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

The Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) is aimed at addressing the adolescent health from a 360-degree perspective. In addition, the National Mental Health Program is also implemented in all the blocks of the State. These programs address the issues of physical and psychological well-being.

Future Imperatives

1. Comprehensive Health Infrastructure Upgradation

Upgradation of physical infrastructure shall be done at all the 659 Health facilities in the State, including District Hospitals, PHCs, CHCs and sub-centres. The improved infrastructure will provide a base for improvement of the various government programs relating to youth and adolescent health, including maternal health.

2. Focus of Maternal Health

The implementation of all existing programs shall be fast tracked in a systematic manner to bring the MMR figures to below the national average in a period of 3 years. Further concerted efforts would be made, in conjunction with all stakeholders, to address the issues of teenage pregnancies and high TFR.

3. Focus on Mental Health and Overall Wellbeing

Programs for increasing awareness around mental health issues and psycho-social care for young people shall be upscaled and prioritized. Further, the Government of India's 'Fit India Movement' campaign will be leveraged to promote mass participation of youth in various sports and physical activities and campaigns including walkathons, cyclothons, Fit India School weeks, Yoga Seminars, dance fitness weeks, aerobics and Plogging runs.

4. Integrating Health and Fitness into educational curriculum and evaluation

Health, including adolescent health, will be introduced into school curriculum. Health and Wellness Ambassadors shall be identified in every block to identify and train the teachers in the curriculum. Further, health and fitness indicators shall be made part of the student evaluation process at schools and colleges, to incentivize youth to prioritize health early on.

3.3 Thrust Area 3—Counselling and Mentoring

Counselling for the youth involves addressing the issues of wellness, personal growth and career development through engagement with a trained professional. Further, during adolescence, it is natural for young people to search for self-identity, while acquiring social norms, knowledge, and skills, to begin the transition toward adulthood. Counselling can play a crucial role during this period.

Youth Mentoring is a process of matching young individuals with an adult mentor who can be a role model and support the child academically, socially and/ or personally. Mentoring tends to be more informal and holistic than Counselling, which is more formal, and problem focussed. In the context of Meghalaya, the need for mentoring is more acute for rural youth who do not have access to many role models and lack the opportunities to engage meaningfully with mentors.

Present Scenario

Current counselling programs are run by Government departments and some private, community and faith-based organizations. The Social Welfare department has a network of eleven one-stop shop centres for women of all age groups and 89 Child Care Homes being run under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme for children under the age of 18. Counsellors are available at both these centres. However, the focus is on mitigating distress rather than providing holistic counselling.

The Health and Family Welfare Department implements the National Adolescent Health Program under which counselling services are provided to youth in the age group of 10-19 with focus on reproductive and sexual health, mental health, non-communicable diseases, nutrition, injuries and gender-based violence and drugs misuse. About 122 Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC) have been set up at District Hospitals, Community Health Centre and Primary Health centres across the State. In addition, walk-in clinics are being set up at the Sub-Centre level and a network of peer-educators are being trained at the village level to deal with adolescent health related counselling.

Career Counselling is provided by few private education institutions and career fairs are organized from time to time by Government departments. Significantly, counselling on all aspects (distress, adolescent health and career development) is provided by few private, non-governmental and faith-based organizations. However, these organization are predominantly located in urban areas and the scale of operation is small. In summary, the counselling landscape in the State is not well developed and the services are not accessible to many young people.

Currently, there are no government or private programs for youth mentoring. Where it exists, mentoring is an informal, non-structured activity occurring in families, educational institutions, youth clubs and sports associations.

Future imperatives

1. Youth Mentoring for mid-adolescents

Mentoring and aspiration development bootcamps will be conducted across the State to empower the youth with the awareness, clarity and confidence to pursue the career paths suited for them. Systematic efforts would be made to build a network of youth mentors who will volunteer to provide mentorship.

2. Broadbasing Counselling Services

Majority of the existing counselling services at present are focused and limited to certain age groups such as under 18 and for youth at the risk. A centralised database of all counsellors, Government and non-Government, shall be created and they shall be upskilled in a systematic manner. A Cadre of community counsellors shall also be mobilised. This network of counsellors shall be connected to youth requiring and asking for counselling services. The cadre shall be expanded year on year to maximise their reach and accessibility.

3. Financial Support to Voluntary Organisations

The State government is cognizant of the fact that there are several not for profit entities and faith-based organisation that extend counselling and mentoring support and services to the youth in urban and rural areas. A structured framework shall be put in place for extension of financial support to these entities to enable expansion of their services.

4. Annual Calendar for Career Counselling and Career Fairs

The State Government shall institutionalise an annual calendar for career counselling and career fairs across all districts and blocks targeting the youth who are in secondary and higher secondary school. The annual career counselling calendar would create a platform for meaningful engagement and aid the youth in making the right career choices. Annual career fairs would be mega events proposed to be organised at different locations in the state encompassing a larger ambit of potential career and internship opportunities.

5. Youth Helpline

A dedicated, 24/7, professionally managed and operated helpline would be established that will be a one stop shop for all matters that affect the youth. The helpline shall provide the youth access to various services such as tele counselling services relating to health and wellbeing, career related guidance, grievances and complaints, information on various schemes and programmes for the youth.

3.4 Thrust Area 4–Employment, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Employment remains a fundamental concern for the youth. Given that Meghalaya is predominantly a rural economy, primary sector provides the major source of employment. In 2021, about 63 percent of the population is engaged in the primary sector, an 8-percentage point decrease from 2013. The percentage of people engaged in the secondary sector continues to be around 5 percent over the years. The share of employment in the tertiary sector has increased from 25 to 32 percent during the period 2013-21. The Unemployment Rate amongst the youth (15-29 years) is at 6.8 percent against the national rate of 16 percent. The unemployment rate in the Urban areas at 23.1 percent is higher than the national rate of 20.02 percent, while the rural rate of 8.9 percent is much lower than the national rate of 17.3 percent.

As the National and the State economies grow and as service sector expands, more job opportunities are being created in the urban areas. However, youth need to be adequately skilled to take advantage of the job opportunities, both within and outside the State. Another channel to reduce unemployment is promotion of entrepreneurship, which will lead to both self-employment and wage employment. Entrepreneurship has traditionally not been a preferred career choice for the youth of the State, given the various structural constraints like distance from markets and unavailability of credit.

Present Scenario

As mentioned above, expansion of the service sector, skill development and promotion of entrepreneurship hold the key to solving the challenges of unemployment and under employment. Tourism development has been prioritized as a lever for service sector expansion. Massive efforts are underway to improve the tourism infrastructure in the State, including building of large hotels, opening of air connectivity and improving road connectivity.

On Skill development, flagship programs of the Government of India including the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY) are being implemented. Various Government Departments like the Agriculture, Community and Rural Development, Commerce and Industries, Education, IT, Labour and Employment are also undertaking industry specific capacity building and upskilling programmes. The 10 Industrial Training Institutes in the State have been strengthened. The process of vocationalization of school education has begun and the program is being implemented in 55 secondary and higher secondary schools.

Promotion of entrepreneurship has been the core focus of the State Government for the last few years. Enterprise promotion is one of core pillars of the State's development vision for 2030. As part of this strategy, Enterprise Facilitation Centres have been set up in all blocks and handholding support is being provided to aspiring entrepreneurs. A comprehensive program for building and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the State called PRIME (Promotion of Innovative Market Driven Enterprises) has been launched. Under this program, identification of and incubation support for entrepreneurs has been initiated.

Future Imperatives**1. Setting up of one-stop centres for Entrepreneurship and Skills across the State**

Multiple departments and agencies are involved in both skill development and entrepreneurship promotion. There is a need to provide a single point of contact for entrepreneurs, where they can be facilitated in a holistic manner. This facilitation should include access to various skill development programs, support for preparation of project reports and business plans, access to technology and machinery and credit and market linkages. These centres should be located at all the district and block headquarters and should become the hubs for entrepreneurship promotion and skill development. Further, the existing employment exchange centres shall also be repositioned as hubs for all career related services and focus on providing career counselling and vocational guidance activities.

2. Prioritizing skilling for local economy

The existing skilling programs are based on a placement linked models and focus largely on placing youth in service sector jobs outside the State. While these programs are beneficial, there is a need to re-prioritize skilling programs for providing jobs in the local economy, with focus on the primary sector. Skilling young people to be trained farmers and producers by adopting modern and sustainable production practices will reduce the under employment and improve production, productivity and incomes in rural areas. Similar logic applies to the Tourism sector.

3. State Skills Registry and linking of skilled individuals with the job market

Skill development efforts are conducted in silos across different Government departments. While departments will continue to conduct their own domain specific training programs, there is a need to have a central skill registry/ database on the trainees of the different programs. This registry shall be publicly available so that potential employers are able to look for skilled manpower in an efficient manner.

4. Induction of Entrepreneurship Modules in the state educational curriculum

Integrating the fundamentals of entrepreneurship into the educational curriculum would promote and develop entrepreneurship thinking amongst the students and would facilitate the development of the requisite mindset, skills and competencies at an early age. The State shall make concentrated efforts for the development of an entrepreneurship module for induction in the secondary and higher secondary curriculums in partnership with leading entities in the field.

5. Flexible funding support for young entrepreneurs

A fundamental challenge for young people to take to entrepreneurship is access to credit. Given that the processes and the compliances required for availing credit through the banking system are long and stringent, most young aspiring entrepreneurs have to turn to non-formal sources of credit. There is a need to provide flexible funding support to young entrepreneurs in the form of grants or patient capital. The State shall collaborate with banks and other financial institutions to create such funding programs.

6. Fellowships and Apprenticeships

Fellowships provide an opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs to work on their ideas and to prototype. To encourage and support such young entrepreneurs, start-up fellowships that provide for a monthly stipend for 12 months will be institutionalized. Further, a structured framework shall be developed for apprenticeship with individuals and industry experts.

7. Early introduction to skill development

While a small number of schools do offer vocational education, there is a need to expand this to provide young people with a strong understanding of the skills landscape during their formative years. Further, skilling should also be available to out of school children as they try to identify a career path. The State shall implement as pre-vocational educational program that can lay the foundations for vocational education and for skill development.

8. Awards and Recognition

Competitions for identification and recognition of entrepreneurs will be institutionalized. The Chief Minister's e-Championship Challenge, an ongoing program for identification of the 100-top start-up/entrepreneurial ideas from the State, will be made an annual event. The Chief Minister's Entrepreneur of the month program will also be strengthened. The stories of the champions and awardees shall be documented and publicized systematically to inspire more entrepreneurial thinking amongst the youth.

3.5 Thrust Area 5- Sports

The importance of Sports in general and for young people in particular cannot be over emphasized. Participation in Sports leads to increased physical activity and health. It teaches young people the values of fair play, non-discrimination, respect for others, respect for rules, problem solving skills and teamwork. Sports boosts self-esteem reduces stress and enables the formation of social and community bonds. Research shows that involvement in sports helps improve social interactions, increases confidence, improves listening skills and health.

Sport is woven in the fabric of every community in the State. Traditional sports have been and continue to be a part of every community's lifestyle. Young people have shown keenness and capacity to engage successfully in sports like Archery, Athletics, Football and various combat sports. Sports is therefore an arena for achieving excellence and for improving overall well-being for the youth.

Present Scenario

The State Government released the State Sports Policy in 2019 aiming at promoting increased participation in Sports for achieving competitive excellence and positioning the State as a leading sporting State in the country. Several of the commitments in the policy are being implemented, including the creation of high-quality sporting infrastructure, supporting the sports associations and organization of sporting events. The Meghalaya Games were organised in early 2020 featuring over 2,000 athletes from all the districts in the State. The State is also slated to host the 39th edition of the National Games.

Programs of the Government of India like Khelo India and Fit India Campaign are also being implemented to specifically engage the youth in Sport.

Future Imperatives

1. Development and augmentation of sports infrastructure

The State Government will work towards development and upgradation of core Infrastructure and grassroot Infrastructure in a phased manner. Major sporting facilities are already being built and upgraded in the urban areas. However, to broad-base sports, infrastructure at the sub-district and rural areas will also be built in a systematic manner.

2. Creation of Centres of Excellence

Centres of excellence and high-performance centres will need to be set up in disciplines that have high podium-finish potential in the State. These centres will have the qualified technical

manpower and modern sports equipment. The funding for these centres will be mobilized through central government programs and through partnerships with national and international sports institutions and organisations.

3. Structured talent identification and development

A systematic framework for the identification and nurturing of talent will be put in place following the principle of 'Right Talent for Right Sport.' This will comprise the setting up of discipline level talent identification committees, partnering with state, national and international sports bodies and implementation of global standards of talent identification and development.

4. Promotion and development of Indigenous Sports

A framework for the promotion and development of indigenous sports, which continue to engage the youth will be developed. This will enable participation of young people, particularly in rural areas. An annual calendar of events and competitions for indigenous sports will be developed.

5. Promotion of mass participation in sports and physical activities

Sporting events that promote mass participation of young people will be prioritized. These include events like runs and marathons, cyclothons, triathlons, cross fit events, state/interstate level sports Olympiads for schools and colleges.

6. Structured and engaging sports training for adolescents

Given that sport provides very visible impacts during adolescence and directs the energies of young people in constructive channels, a systematic program for engaging them in sports will be put in place. All mid-adolescents will be provided an opportunity to train in at least one sport. Further, Self-defence orientation programmes shall also be enhanced to adolescent girl child in all schools with the objectives to build self-confidence.

7. Awards and Recognition

State level awards shall be institutionalised such as the Chief Minister's Sports Person of the Month Award where in athletes/coaches/youth mentors who have either achieved merit in their respective sports or have shown consistent dedication and commitment to promote sports and physical activity in their region shall be recognised, encouraged and awarded. The state shall also ensure disbursement of welfare schemes for young athletes as per the sports policy such as cash awards for merit achieving athletes, sports quota in educational institutions, sports quota for class 1 - 3 officer level government jobs.

3.6 Thrust Area 6 - Cultural and creative industries

UNESCO defines Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) as activities "whose principal purpose is production or reproduction, promotion, distribution or commercialization of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature." Empowering young people through the social and economic opportunities that cultural and creative industries can offer is an essential aspect of Youth Development. This includes equipping them with the skills and techniques needed to run successful creative enterprises; strengthening the development of professional associations, networks and alliances for young cultural and creative professionals; enhancing artistic and creative skills that can foster more dynamic creative sectors; raising awareness among youth about the contribution culture makes to development. Some of the critical sectors under the ambit of CCI include Music, Movies, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Gaming and Crafts. CCIs have huge employment potential for the youth. For instance, CCIs employ more youth than any other sector in Europe and women play a dominant role in these industries in the developing world.

Meghalaya's rich cultural and natural heritage, the high tourism potential and a large young population connected to the wider world provide a strong base for the development of CCIs.

Present Scenario

The State Government implements programs for the promotion of indigenous folk and tribal arts, culture and vanishing art forms in the field of music, dance and drama. Financial aid is provided to voluntary cultural organisations, budding authors, artistes and artisans. However, a concerted effort for the development of CCIs needs to be made.

Future Imperatives

1. Supporting cultural and creative entrepreneurs

Designing special programs for supporting cultural and creative entrepreneurship amongst the youth could be the first step toward building CCIs in the State. This will include identification of the entrepreneurs in the cultural and the creative space and providing them with financing and marketing opportunities. Recognizing and giving wider publicity to their stories will also inspire more young people to take to CCIs.

2. Building networks and alliances of CCI participants

Regional and state-wide networks and alliances of crafts persons, musicians and other CCI participants can provide platforms for meaningful engagement, effective forward linkages and quicker growth of the sector. While such alliances should mostly comprise and be led by the stakeholders, the Government shall play a catalytic role in their formation and strengthening.

3. Infrastructure development

The development of CCIs needs enabling infrastructure like performance and event spaces, academies of excellence, design studios and maker's markets. Such infrastructure shall be developed in the short and medium term, particularly in the urban centres.

4. Making tourism more experiential

The State has huge unrealised tourism potential. As investments are made for tourism development, there has to be a strategic focus on making tourism more experiential, involving deep engagement with local people and communities. This will trigger the demand side for CCIs. Further, a calendar of events for music, arts and crafts festivals and exhibitions shall be developed and adhered to.

5. Skilling and design interventions

Adolescents should be introduced concept of CCIs, the success stories of these industries globally and the making of local cultural and heritage artefacts like baskets, fabric and clay artefacts. This will enable young people to imagine the possibilities of cultural industries. Young people belonging to established creative and cultural clusters should be particularly targeted for upskilling and design interventions. This will be done through partnerships, both individual and institutional.

3.7 Thrust Area 7- Engagement and Leadership

Youth engagement is broadly understood as sustained involvement and active participation of a young person in activities that focus outside of himself or herself. Youth can be effective change-makers if provided the opportunity to engage and participate. The processes of meaningful engagement will increase empathy and improve problem solving skills. Effective engagement will increase a sense of ownership and belongingness and decrease traditional problem behaviours. It is also believed that

problem behaviours are a result of disengagement and a sense of being under-valued. Youth engaged in various activities and issues builds the skills to become effective leaders. Engagement is, hence, the first step towards nurturing society's future leadership.

Present Scenario

Youth engagement has been an integral part of the societal functioning in Khasi, Jaintia and Garo cultures. Institutions like the Seng Samla provide fora and opportunities for young people to engage. The vibrant student unions and youth clubs found across the State are also testimony to the willingness of youth to engage on various social and political issues. The programs of the departments of Education and Sports and Youth Affairs also provide opportunities for youth engagement. These include youth exchange programs, activities of Nehru Yuva Kendras, the National Cadet Corps and support to youth clubs. The reach of these programs is, however, not very wide and there is a strong need to upscale these programs. Further, structured programs that enable the Government to directly engage with the youth and to hear their views on important government programs and social issues are missing.

Future Imperatives

1. Creation of structured engagement mechanisms

Creation of digital platforms and/or portals for the youth to share their views and opinions on the various schemes and services being implemented by the government is an immediate need. As connectivity and mobile penetration continue to improve, this will enable youth, both as individuals and groups, to engage systematically on issues. In addition to technology platforms, there is a need for an Institutionalized calendar of seminars, debates, webinars, youth camps at the State, district and sub-district level.

2. Youth Centres

Youth Centres will be set up in all the district and block headquarters as vibrant spaces for engagement of the youth. The centres will have basic facilities for sports (indoor and outdoor) and recreation, a library/ reading room, spaces for skilling and organizing youth activities. These centres will be managed by community-based youth organizations.

3. Youth Portal

A robust youth portal will be developed, which will be the virtual platform for engagement of the youth with each other, the wider community and the Government. The portal shall provide engaging and creative means of connecting and networking.

4. Organisation of international and domestic exposure trips.

The existing youth exchange and exposure programs will be scaled up. Youth from different sectors will be systematically selected and sent to domestic and international exposure visits so that they are able to experience different cultures and environments, interact with youth and other stakeholders from different cultures. This will increase their self-esteem and will enhance the quality of engagement, both with their communities and the Government.

5. Instilling Social Responsibility and Good Citizenship behaviour

Opportunities shall be made available to the youth at community and block level for participation in community development and rejuvenation activities and programmes. Neighbourhood youth parliaments shall be institutionalised at block level where in the concerns plaguing the youth at the community level could be put up for discussion to identify and implement solutions.

6. Engagement in Disaster Management

Meghalaya's youth have been participating in various disaster management efforts. A recent case in point is the youth engagement in COVID management and containment in various urban localities and villages. Building on these traditions, youth will be prioritized for training on various disaster management activities so that they can engage with the communities in times of greatest need.

7. Calendar of Volunteering Opportunities

Another way to engage is through volunteering, which provides a fulfilling way of engaging with another community and contributing to its well-being. A mechanism for structuring such volunteering opportunities within the State needs to be established. A space with significant potential for engagement is in urban youth volunteering in rural areas in the sectors of education, livelihoods, entrepreneurship and tourism.

8. Revamping of CMYD Scheme

The existing Chief Minister's Youth Development Program (CMYDS) under which funding support is provided to the districts for taking up various engagement and leadership promotion activities shall be revamped and expanded to enable more effective decentralized action.

3.8 Thrust Area 8 - Inclusion

Inclusion is essential both for individual flourishing and for societal progress. The National Youth Policy outlines the categories of youth that need to be prioritized for inclusion and special attention: Socially and economically disadvantaged youth, women, migrant youth, out-of-school or drop-outs from the formal educational mainstream, youth living with disability or suffering from chronic diseases, youth at risk, including but not limited to youth suffering from substance abuse, youth at risk of human trafficking and youth working in hazardous occupations, sex workers, youth that suffer from social or moral stigma including but not limited to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) youth, youth infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, youth in institutional care, orphanages, correctional homes and prisons.

In Meghalaya, youth living in rural areas also deserve special attention, given the disparity in opportunities and access to facilities between rural and urban areas.

Present Scenario

The departments of Social Welfare and the Health and Family Welfare implement several programs for youth with disabilities and risk and for young women. Special programs for youth with disabilities include vocational trainings for self-employment, scholarships, financial assistances in the form of uniform grants, book grants, conveyance and unemployment allowance and assistance to voluntary organizations working with youth with disabilities. For youth suffering from substance abuse, the Government is supporting rehabilitation centres and drop-in centres and providing grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations working in the sector. Juvenile Homes, orphanages and correctional homes are being run by Government and both voluntary and faith-based organizations.

For young women there are programs focussing on improving the nutrition and well-being of out of school adolescent girls and a number of programs for improving maternal health. For youth suffering from HIV/ AIDS, the State AIDS control society implements a range of programs from building awareness to providing medication.

The Community and Rural development department runs programs specially targeting the rural youth. The Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY) is a program focussed on training the rural youth. Under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and the Mahatma Gandhi National

Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) rural youth have opportunities for improving livelihoods through self and wage employment.

Future Imperatives

1. Prioritising Rural Youth

Targeted interventions would be made specifically for the rural youth. Skilling and entrepreneurship programmes shall be developed focusing on industries and opportunities available in rural areas like Agri-processing and ecotourism. As listed in the other thrust areas, concerted efforts will be made to bridge the opportunity and access gap between rural and urban youth in the areas of healthcare, education and sports infrastructure. Youth centres will be built in all prominent rural centres as places for engagement.

2. Upscaling support for youth at risk

The number and the quality of facilities for rehabilitation of drug users will be improved significantly through expanding the grants-in-aid programs to voluntary organizations.

3. Expanding support for the Youth with disabilities.

The state government shall holistically expand the schemes and programmes for youth with disabilities in the state and shall mobilise and upskill additional Community based rehabilitation workers (CBRW) and multipurpose rehabilitation workers (MRW) across all districts.

3.9 Thrust Area 9 - Environmental Consciousness

Mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change is one of the fundamental challenges facing mankind today. The role of young people in dealing with challenge and in protecting the environment is being increasingly recognized. Young people can make their homes, schools and organizations more environmentally friendly by adopting environmentally friendly practices, recycling of different materials as well as preserving resources such as water and electricity. Further, increasing environmental consciousness at a young age will have long lasting impact.

Environmental conservation is extremely important for Meghalaya, given the fragile hilly ecosystem. The State has a rich heritage of community conservation as demonstrated in by the sacred groves, community and village reserves, fish sanctuaries and living root bridges. However, many challenges have emerged in the last few decades including deforestation, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, changing rainfall patterns and contamination of water bodies.

Present Scenario

The State Government has prioritized environmental protection and sustainability. In addition to the departmental programs being implemented by the departments of Forest and Environment, Soil and Water Conservation, Community and Rural Development and Planning, sustainability focussed externally aided projects are being implemented with funding support from multi-lateral agencies. While youth are engaged in many of these programs, there is no systematic framework for involving the youth in environmental conservation and to increase their consciousness and responsibility around the issue.

Future Imperatives

1. Environment Conservation Youth Corps

The State will raise an Environment Conservation Youth Corps in a systematic effort to have a cadre of youth working on environmental conservation. Every village and locality will have at least one youth who is trained on environment issues, and thus empowered with the knowledge and technology to be able to make an impact in their communities. These Youth Corps will be

entrusted to work with their communities in developing sustainable natural resource management plans.

2. Integration of Environment Conservation and Climate Change awareness in Education Curriculum

General and specific content relevant to the Meghalayan context shall be developed by key stakeholders and be integrated into the state education curriculum to spread awareness and best practices on environment conservation and climate change.

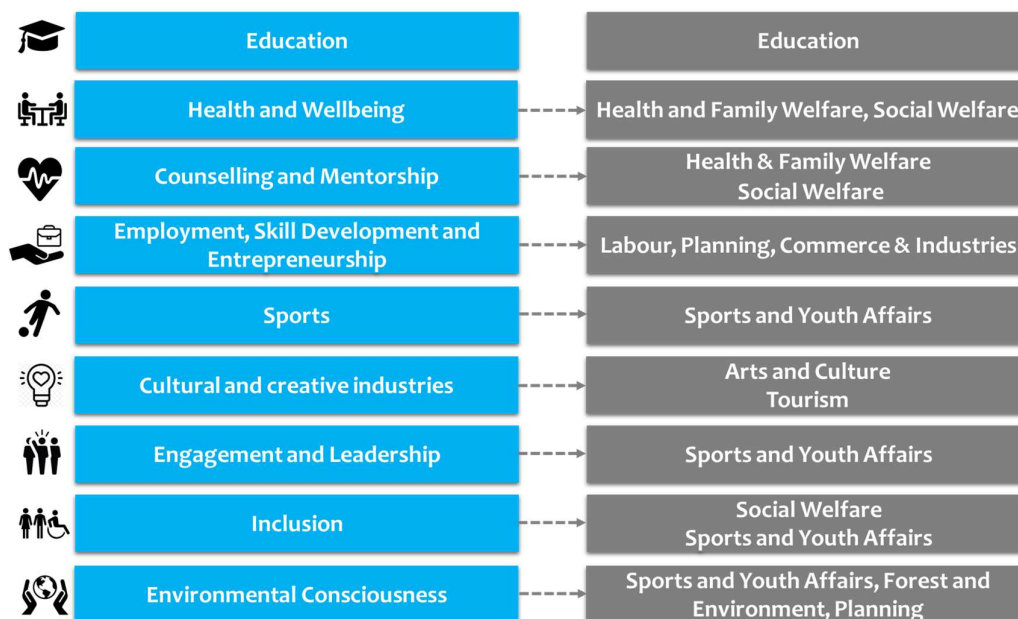
3. Engaging youth in Eco-Tourism

The State will make concentrated efforts to create opportunities for the youth to engage in and to build livelihoods in eco-tourism projects with emphasis on environment conservation and protection. Environmental conservation will thus be integrated with rural livelihoods so that youth can have meaningful jobs in their own villages and build a sustainable and happy Meghalaya.

Chapter 4

4 Implementation and Coordination Mechanism

The policy outlines the comprehensive youth development framework comprising the expansion of several existing programs and launch of new interventions and programs. The implementation of the policy will have to be done by several departments of the State Government in collaboration with the private, non-governmental and community organizations. A short term and long-term implementation plan linked with the interventions aligned with the identified thrust areas shall be developed within 3 months of release of this policy. Table below shows a mapping of the various thrust areas to the State Government departments that are responsible for implementation.



A High-Powered Committee (HPC) chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and comprising of all Cabinet Ministers, senior officials and other eminent individuals will be formed to be the apex agency for driving the policy execution. The Chief Secretary will also be part of the committee and the senior most secretary of the Sports and Youth Affairs department shall be the member convenor. The mandate of the Committee shall be to:

1. Provide future direction and setting an annual action plan and a perspective plan
2. Periodic review of the implementation of policy interventions
3. Mobilisation of funds and resources for interventions and programmes
4. Monitor the achievement of the policy outcomes and objectives.

The HPC shall meet at least once every six months. In addition to the HPC, a policy implementation committee will also be set up to review the implementation of the policy on a quarterly basis. This committee will be headed by the Chief Secretary and will have the senior most secretaries from all the related departments. The Director, Sports and Youth Affairs will be the convenor of this committee.

4.1 Funding the policy implementation and Youth Budgeting

The implementation of this ambitious policy will require the allocation of financial resources. While several of the ongoing interventions are already funded from State and Central resources, the total funds allocated for youth development is not systematically quantified. To bridge this gap, the State will initiate the process of Youth Budgeting for the financial year 2021-22. This youth budgeting will be made following the standard practices followed by Government of India for gender budgeting. The youth budget for the year 2021-22 will be placed before the HPC three months after the notification of this policy. For the subsequent years, the youth budget document will be placed in the Assembly along with the annual budget. Further, the size of the youth budget will be systematically increased every year taking 2021-22 as the base year.

4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The indicative framework for monitoring the impact and achievement of the various key interventions aligned with the thrust areas are indicated in Annexure 2. The framework shall be reviewed annually at the high-power committee and the necessary amendments shall be incorporated as required.

The Department of Sports and Youth affairs shall compile the data on the various performance monitoring indicators on a quarterly basis for review by the Policy implementation committee.

The evaluation of the various programs taken up under the aegis of the policy will be undertaken through credible agencies once every two years. The findings of the evaluation shall form the basis for recalibrating the programs and designing newer interventions, if required. The policy will be comprehensively reviewed after 5 years.

5 Annexures

5.1 Annexure 1.0 - Age wise youth population in Meghalaya

POPULATION IN FIVE YEAR AGE-GROUP BY RESIDENCE AND SEX: CENSUS 2021									
Age-group	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
All ages	38,29,047	19,07,343	19,21,704	30,33,988	15,15,225	15,18,763	7,95,059	3,92,118	4,02,941
0-4	5,08,442	2,57,911	2,50,531	4,43,253	2,24,351	2,18,902	65,189	33,560	31,628
5-9	4,49,703	2,28,842	2,20,861	3,88,257	1,97,119	1,91,138	61,446	31,724	29,722
10-14	4,59,067	2,31,751	2,27,316	3,83,348	1,93,686	1,89,662	75,719	38,065	37,654
15-19	4,26,263	2,13,901	2,12,362	3,36,062	1,68,681	1,67,381	90,201	45,220	44,982
20-24	4,16,267	2,04,991	2,11,276	3,19,770	1,55,743	1,64,026	96,497	49,248	47,250
25-29	3,44,161	1,78,423	1,65,739	2,56,714	1,33,100	1,23,614	87,447	45,323	42,124
30-34	2,44,406	1,23,379	1,21,027	1,77,252	89,233	88,019	67,154	34,146	33,009
35-39	2,03,294	96,912	1,06,382	1,49,033	72,209	76,824	54,261	24,703	29,558
40-44	2,05,678	97,004	1,08,674	1,52,759	72,684	80,075	52,919	24,319	28,600
45-49	1,67,963	81,905	86,058	1,25,161	61,333	63,828	42,802	20,572	22,231
50-54	1,24,195	60,728	63,467	92,137	46,408	45,729	32,058	14,319	17,738
55-59	84,610	41,789	42,821	61,159	31,123	30,037	23,451	10,666	12,785
60-64	65,978	31,849	34,129	49,389	24,142	25,246	16,589	7,706	8,883
65-69	48,103	22,463	25,640	38,338	18,218	20,119	9,765	4,245	5,520
70-74	30,053	13,092	16,961	23,459	10,481	12,978	6,594	2,611	3,983
75-79	17,261	6,931	10,330	12,847	5,352	7,495	4,414	1,579	2,835
80+	22,729	9,050	13,679	16,631	6,969	9,662	6,098	2,082	4,016
Age not stated	10,874	6,424	4,450	8,420	4,393	4,027	2,453	2,031	422

5.2 Annexure 2.0 – Performance Monitoring Indicators

Thrust Area	Performance Monitoring Indicators	Frequency of Evaluation	Mapped Departments
Education	1. Number of educational infrastructure upgraded/developed/repaired	Biannually	Education Department
	2. Number of new educational infrastructure (schools, additional classrooms) constructed	Biannually	
	3. Number of teachers upskilled	Quarterly	
	4. Number of educational institutions setup in underserved areas	Biannually	
	5. Number of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya's upgraded/improved	Quarterly	
	6. Number of laptops/smart-phones/tablets distributed to merit achieving youth	Annually	
	7. Number of Residential Schools constructed and operationalised	Biannually	
Health and Wellbeing	1. Number of Infrastructure upgraded/developed/repaired including district hospitals, PHC's, CHC's and Sub Centres	Biannually	Health and Family Welfare Department, Social Welfare Department
	2. Number of new infrastructure constructed	Annually	
	3. Reduction in MMR	Annually	
	4. Number of fit India campaigns planned and conducted	Quarterly	
	5. Number of rehabilitation and de-addiction centres upgraded or constructed	Biannually	
	6. Number of youth-oriented IEC campaigns and awareness drives conducted	Quarterly	
	7. Number of capacity building workshops and programmes conducted on drug and substance abuse	Quarterly	
	8. Number of educational institutions adopting fitness boot camps and fitness tracking programmes	Biannually	
Counselling and Mentoring	1. Number of youth trained/skilled/enrolled in the youth mentoring programmes	Quarterly	Social Welfare Department, Planning Department
	2. Number of counsellors identified, mobilised and trained	Quarterly	
	3. Number of voluntary organisations, NGO's supported	Quarterly	
	4. Number of career mela's and fairs organised	Bi-annually	
	5. Number of youth counselled and guided through the 24/7 youth helpline	Quarterly	

Thrust Area	Performance Monitoring Indicators	Frequency of Evaluation	Mapped Departments
Employment, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	1. Number of physical one stop centres/incubation hubs established	Biannually	Labour Department, MSSDDS, Commerce and Industries
	2. Number of youth supported under the start-up fellowship scheme	Biannually	
	3. Number of youth registered on the state skills registry	Quarterly	
	4. Number of youth entrepreneurs financially supported	Biannually	
	5. Number of youth employment centres upgraded/developed	Quarterly	
	6. Number of schools adopting entrepreneurship courses in their curriculum	Annually	
	7. Number of youth trained in primary sector activities	Quarterly	
	8. Number of youth entrepreneurs recognised/felicitated	Biannually	
Sports	1. Number of core and grassroot sports infrastructure developed	Biannually	Sports and Youth Affairs Department
	2. Number of high-performance centres and centres of excellence established	Biannually	
	3. Number of youth participants in talent identification camps	Quarterly	
	4. Number of events and competitions organised to promote indigenous sports	Quarterly	
	5. Number of youth registered in training and coaching academies in various sports	Quarterly	
	6. Number of tournaments, events and competitions organised	Quarterly	
	7. Number of state contingent sent for participation in events and competitions	Biannually	
	8. Number of merit achieving athletes awarded and felicitated	Biannually	
Cultural and creative industries	1. Number of youth run arts and crafts establishments and start-ups supported	Biannually	Arts and Culture Department, Tourism Department
	2. Number of academies of excellence established	Biannually	
	3. Number of state level/district level councils established for promotion of arts, crafts and music	Biannually	
	4. Number of arts, crafts galleries, exhibitions and programmes organised	Quarterly	
	5. Number of youth felicitated and awarded	Biannually	
Engagement and Leadership	1. Number of youth engaged in youth portals	Biannually	Sports and Youth Affairs Department
	2. Number of seminars, debates, webinars, youth camps organised	Annually	
	3. Number of Chief Ministers Youth Centres established	Quarterly	
	4. Number of youth sent for domestic exposure trips	Biannually	
	6. Number of youth sent for international exposure trips	Biannually	

Thrust Area	Performance Monitoring Indicators	Frequency of Evaluation	Mapped Departments	
Inclusion	7. Number of youth cadres identified, mobilised and trained in disaster management	Quarterly	Social Welfare Department Community and Rural Development	
	8. Number of youth participating in volunteering programmes	Quarterly		
	1. Number of rural youth engaged in skilling and entrepreneurship programmes	Quarterly		
	2. Number of Voluntary organisations and NGO's working in youth development supported	Quarterly		
	3. Number of youth with disabilities supported through various schemes and programmes	Quarterly		
Environmental Consciousness	1. Number of environmental youth corps identified, mobilised and trained	Quarterly	Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Forests and Environment Department, Tourism Department, Education Department	
	2. Number of educational institutions adopting environment conservation in their curriculum	Annually		
	3. Number of youth engaged in eco-tourism projects	Biannually		

Commissioner and Secretary
Sports and Youth Affairs Department,
Government of Meghalaya.